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December 3, 1962

TODAY THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE STATED:

"The proceedings of the National Security Council have been secret since its founding in 1947 and will continue to be. The various positions of members of the National Security Council taken during deliberations must also remain secret in order to permit access by the President to the frankest expressions of views."

"I can state flatly, however, that Ambassador Stevenson strongly supported the decision taken by the President on the quarantine and brilliantly developed the United States position at the United Nations during the days which followed. He has also played the key role in the negotiations at the United Nations on the Cuban matter."

I am grateful to the President for his flattering reference to my participation in the Cuban crisis. Because I agree with the President's admonition about the importance of free and frank expression of views and the security of his most intimate deliberations I do not feel at liberty to discuss my advice beyond what I have already said, that I never proposed to trade our bases abroad to get the Soviets out of their missile base in Cuba, and that I favored the blockade on the shipment of more Soviet arms to Cuba. I was also emphatically in favor of using the peace-keeping machinery of the UN before taking other measures to insure our safety. And of course I am happy that this policy has worked so successfully that the nuclear menace from Cuba has been eliminated and war avoided at the same time.

It seems to me especially unfortunate that at a time when the country has supported the President's firm and temperate policy in this dangerous situation that the deliberations should be reported at all, which can only aid the hostile forces in the world, and also be reported so inaccurately as this magazine has done. Such reporting can injure individuals, myself in this case, and contaminate the well-springs of history. But it can also inhibit the very kind of free discussion from which mature and thoughtful policy is made.

I believe President Kennedy should be able to count on both the confidence and candor of his advisors. I am sure that is what he wants.

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